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Security Council

Fifty-second Year

Provisional

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Friday, 14 November 1997, 11.55 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Qin Huasun	(China)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Larraín
	Costa Rica	Mr. Sáenz Biolley
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Japan	Mr. Konishi
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Portugal	Mr. Monteiro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Sweden	Mr. Dahlgren
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Gomersall
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/1997/859)

97-86533 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.55 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan (S/1997/859)

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) took a seat at the Council table.

The President *(interpretation from Chinese)*: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan, document S/1997/859. Members of the Council also have before them document S/1997/887, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations. I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1997/808, which contains the text of a letter dated 17 October 1997 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Tajikistan, on whom I now call.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) *(interpretation from Russian)*: First allow me to convey our gratitude to you, Sir, for your handling of the work of the Security Council during November and wish you every success in discharging your important and highly responsible job.

Today the Security Council will be adopting an extremely important decision aimed at supporting the peace process in the Republic of Tajikistan. The Government of Tajikistan believes that international support will make it possible to cement the peace process, give it an additional impetus and dynamic, and make it more stable and irreversible.

Expanding the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) will definitely mark the beginning of a qualitatively new stage in the practical implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. This decision is of exceptional value precisely at this time, when the Commission on National Reconciliation, which has demonstrated a high degree of tolerance and confirmed its spirit of constructive cooperation, has started the practical implementation of its programme of work in keeping with the tight timetable for implementing the General Agreement.

The vigorous efforts made by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, together with the leadership of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) to obtain wider support in the country for the peace agreement arrived at between them is already yielding real fruit.

The Agreement on a Ceasefire and the Cessation of Other Hostile Acts concluded between the Government of Tajikistan and the UTO is, on the whole, being complied with effectively. In accordance with the Act on Mutual Forgiveness an exchange of prisoners of war and detainees has taken place.

Intensive planning work is being carried out to implement the Amnesty Law. At the individual level, in keeping with the relevant legislative procedures in the Republic, cases of previously convicted citizens or those under investigation are being reviewed, and the responsible State organs are making recommendations regarding amnesty on each one.

Work has started to prepare amendments and additions to the current Constitution of the country. Together with the Republic's experts and jurists, representatives of UNMOT, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are also involved.

The resolution of military questions is also entering an active phase. After 16 November armed formations which have not declared their loyalty and allegiance will be considered to be illegal and will be subject to compulsory disarmament. At the same time, it is important to note that the process of registration of UTO fighters inside Tajikistan, though not without difficulty, is nonetheless continuing. Questions of repatriation of UTO fighters from the territory of Afghanistan are in the course of resolution.

There has been substantial progress in the repatriation of Tajik refugees who are in northern Afghanistan. We are particularly gratified at the active repatriation of our compatriots from the Sakhi Camp in the Mazar-e-Sharif region by the shortest route through Termez.

There are serious reasons to hope that with the active assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the assistance of the Government of Uzbekistan, the absolute majority of Tajik refugees who through a stroke of fate had long found themselves on the other side of the Panj and the Amu Darya Rivers will greet the 1998 new year in the circle of their families and friends on home soil in Tajikistan. They have been impatiently awaited in their homes, towns and villages where each returning family, particularly old people, women and children, is surrounded by warmth and attention and given as much assistance as possible from the authorities and State and private enterprises.

The regular meetings between the country's President, Emomali Rakhmonov, and the Chairman of the Commission on National Reconciliation and Leader of the UTO, Abdullo Nuri, have become an important factor for strengthening international confidence. They are actively stimulating the process of complying with the provisions of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan.

All this shows that Tajikistan is witnessing an actively developing process of consolidation of its society. The emerging new political reality in the Republic is allowing less and less space for the opponents of the peace process and obliging everyone to adapt to the new conditions.

Tajikistan realizes that the national reconciliation that has started is just the first, although a very important, step on the long path to the establishment of a civil society. It should be followed by another step — a much more difficult and lengthy process of national and State construction aimed at the organic integration of the country into today's mutually linked and mutually dependent world.

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan understands that the main responsibility for the country's future lies on the shoulders of the Tajik people itself. Yet it is also true that our own efforts are clearly not enough, either to assist the least protected strata of the population in the near future to free themselves from the grip of poverty or, particularly, to restore the socio-economic infrastructure of the south of the country that has been destroyed by the war. The people of Tajikistan would be grateful to the international community if it could give us the assistance that it so sorely needs at this critically important stage.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for convening, on 24 and 25 November 1997, in Vienna, the capital of Austria, a donor conference to provide international support for peace and reconciliation in Tajikistan. It is expected that more than 120 delegations will attend the conference, representing Governments, international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations. The delegation of Tajikistan will take part in that conference, headed by the President of our country, Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov.

The results of the work of such a representative international forum are being awaited in Tajikistan with a high level of emotion. We hope that the participants in the conference, on behalf of their Governments and organizations, will come out in favour of substantial support for the Tajik people in consolidating the peace process. This will soon allow each country to join the post-conflict-building; to take part in strengthening the bases of an independent democratic State; to demonstrate their individuality in their work, irrespective of their own political, philosophical or religious views and ambitions; and to contribute to the development of the emerging new socio-economic and political relationships.

Support from the international community will help us not merely to stabilize Tajikistan's economy and to create favourable conditions for normal, stable development in the post-conflict period, but also to attain stability in Central Asia and beyond.

The war has left in its wake not only material destruction, which, for the foreseeable future, can be restored; but also deep mental wounds that will long make themselves felt in society as a whole and in each of its cells. The toxins of mutual distrust continue in some areas to poison the general atmosphere and to befuddle the minds of individuals in our country. Certain people, playing out outmoded scenarios, are trying to use

terrorism and bandit-like attacks to derail the peace process and to nudge it off the high road and onto slippery, twisting byways. However, the country's shift towards a comprehensive and just settlement of the conflict and the establishment of genuine civil peace and concord is irreversible. A grim page of the history of the ancient Tajik people has been turned forever.

It is a great honour for me, on behalf of President Emomali Rakhmonov of the Republic of Tajikistan, to express profound gratitude to the Secretary-General for his unflagging attention and support to the Tajik people in this difficult period for us. We express the hope that the United Nations and its specialized agencies will continue to make an important contribution to the consolidation of the country's stabilization process and that they will consistently and decisively help to restore Tajikistan's economy and social sphere in this post-conflict period.

My Government offers words of special gratitude to the Security Council for its constant attention to the situation in Tajikistan and on the Tajik-Afghan border. Resolutions of the Security Council and statements of its Presidents have had a decisive impact on resolving the inter-Tajik conflict by stressing the main responsibility of the Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, pursuant to the United Nations Charter. The Council's authority has been enhanced by the individual efforts of a number of members who have sought to move the peace process in Tajikistan forward.

The Government and people of Tajikistan are sincerely grateful to the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have played an exceptionally important role in promoting and successfully concluding the inter-Tajik talks, and for their having provided substantial assistance in the post-conflict period. We highly commend the very valuable political contribution made in implementing the General Agreement by States and international organizations members of the Contact Group of guarantors.

The Tajik Government commends the work done by the international humanitarian and non-governmental organizations, which have successfully supplemented the noble efforts of the United Nations in meeting the urgent humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable people, particularly in regions to which refugees from Afghanistan have been returning, and in carrying out the large-scale programme financed by the United Nations Development Programme for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of Tajikistan.

The Government of Tajikistan expresses profound gratitude to the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Merrem, for his invaluable contribution to resolving the inter-Tajik conflict. We hope that he, together with his associates in the United Nations mission in Tajikistan, will continue to fulfil their difficult and often dangerous duties.

We take very seriously our commitments to the host country agreement and are profoundly mindful of our responsibility for the security of United Nations personnel. Our Government, together with the United Tajik Opposition, has begun to develop a joint guard unit, which will be established upon decree of the President. We hope that this unit will discharge its responsible mission and set an example for others in the reintegration process. Also important in this context is the decision of the Commonwealth of Independent States to extend and expand the mandate of its collective peacekeeping force in Tajikistan, whose job at this stage will include the provision, as and when necessary, of assistance in ensuring the safety of the personnel of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international organizations.

We express the hope that joint efforts will be successful and effective and that international personnel will receive from the Tajik people adequate support and hospitality, and will thus be able vigorously and fully to discharge the broad range of responsible and important tasks included in the updated UNMOT mandate.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I thank the representative of Tajikistan for his kind words addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The adoption of today's draft resolution by the Security Council is an extraordinary event. The draft resolution expresses the collective will of the

Council's members to support the peace process being stepped up in Tajikistan.

Russia welcomes the progress noted in the Secretary-General's report in implementing the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, as well as the constructive cooperation of the Government and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) in discharging their obligations under the agreements. This shows that the peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations and the entire international community have not been in vain and that the tiny seedlings of peace are putting down roots, albeit with difficulty, in the war-torn soil of Tajikistan.

The signing of the General Agreement and the start of the work of the Commission on National Reconciliation open prospects for overcoming the political and military confrontation and for the achievement of peace and national reconciliation in that country. It is important that the Security Council has achieved agreement on the need to help to consolidate this trend and to show solidarity with the Tajik people, which so sorely needs general emergency assistance.

Russia commends the work done by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Gerd Merrem, and the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT). We are satisfied by the deepening cooperation between UNMOT and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) collective peacekeeping forces in Tajikistan.

The return of Tajikistan to a peaceful life is a new task for UNMOT. This determined the recommendations of the Secretary-General on expanding the mandate and increasing the size of the Mission, which the Security Council is prepared to endorse.

Serious attention continues to need to be given to providing security for UNMOT personnel. We welcome the creation of the joint unit of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition, which has just been referred to by the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan. This step has major political significance, apart from its military importance. In the event of specific requests from UNMOT, then, with the agreement of the parties, the collective peacekeeping forces of the CIS are prepared to assist.

The mandate of the force, which was recently extended to 31 December, officially established this function. In accordance with the request of the Tajik side, made to the President of Russia as the Chairman of the Council of Heads of State of the CIS, the collective peacekeeping forces of the CIS are also prepared to provide assistance in discharging the inter-Tajik agreements, particularly in the military area.

Repatriation of refugees, reintegration of recent participants in hostilities and other tasks included in the General Agreement place an additional burden on the war-torn economy of Tajikistan. Within the framework of international donor efforts, Russia is considering the possibility of giving assistance — in addition to the significant bilateral humanitarian, financial, economic and other assistance already given to Tajikistan — to implement specific programmes and projects to ease the consequences of war and restore the country's national economy. Coordinating the international efforts in this area is the job of the Vienna international donor conference in support of the peace process in Tajikistan.

The establishment of stable peace and national reconciliation in Tajikistan is important for the Central Asian region and beyond. It will help the efforts of the international community to combat the drugs trade, terrorism and arms smuggling. Russia — together with the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the members of the Contact Group of guarantors — intends to actively assist compliance with all the provisions of the General Agreement, in the interests of the restoration and democratic development of Tajikistan and the prosperity of its people.

I hope that the draft resolution will be adopted unanimously.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join in adopting this draft resolution expanding the size and mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), in recognition of the commitment the parties have made to national reconciliation and reconstruction in Tajikistan. We especially commend their actions to enact an amnesty law, exchange prisoners, repatriate refugees and begin the demobilization of military forces. There is still much to be done, including working out the details for an equitable sharing of power, and we wish them success in the coming months as they implement fully the provisions of the General Agreement.

The parties' inclusion in the General Agreement of an increased role for UNMOT in the peace process is a clear statement of the confidence they place in Gerd Merrem, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and in the personnel of UNMOT, whose performance under trying circumstances has been exemplary. We support the expansion of UNMOT at this critical time in the peace process so that the parties can demobilize rapidly and turn their efforts towards rebuilding Tajikistan. We can now look forward to the day when United Nations peacekeepers can depart and all United Nations involvement in Tajikistan can be reoriented towards reconstruction and development.

The road ahead will be difficult. This is especially true because of the proliferation of armed groups beyond the control of the parties that threaten the security and tranquillity of Tajikistan.

We are concerned for the security of the unarmed UNMOT observers. The United States therefore appreciates the agreement by the parties to establish a joint unit to protect UNMOT personnel. We consider this a bold response to a troublesome problem that will serve as a model for future cooperation between the parties as they integrate other elements of their armed forces.

The problems facing the peace process in Tajikistan are daunting, even more so because the war depleted the resources Tajikistan will need to fulfil all the provisions of the General Agreement. In view of this, the United States endorses the Secretary-General's proposal to hold a donor conference in Vienna on 24 to 25 November. We note that the Secretary-General is appealing for $65 million specifically aimed at ensuring the success of the peace process. The United States intends to contribute to this effort, and urges all States to donate generously.

I note that the transit of Tajik refugees through Uzbekistan has begun, and I want to thank the President and Government of Uzbekistan for their assistance in this critical humanitarian effort.

We understand that, in addition to this appeal for peace and reconciliation activities, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs plans to issue an appeal for emergency humanitarian assistance. We support this effort. Finally, we ask all States to join us in supporting the demining effort in Tajikistan so that future generations will not continue to suffer death and maiming from devices left behind from the war.

The resolution of the conflict in Tajikistan has been a quiet but important United Nations success story. Only a year ago the sides were hopelessly deadlocked, caught in a downward spiral of ceasefire violations and refusing to deal with the core issues. Although Tajikistan is not out of the woods yet, we can take strength from the progress it has made in the last year as we challenge other parties in other conflicts to take risks for peace.

Mr. Konishi (Japan): At the outset, my delegation wishes to pay tribute to Mr. Merrem, Special Representative of the Secretary-General; Brigadier-General Izydorczyk, Chief Military Observer; and all the men and women serving with the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT). It is thanks to their dedicated efforts on the ground that the concrete process of implementing the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan has recently begun.

Japan finds it encouraging that both the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) are maintaining the ceasefire and making serious efforts to carry out their commitments under the General Agreement, including actions with regard to the Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR).

Given this positive development of the situation, I strongly believe that the international community should strengthen its assistance to the parties in their efforts to establish lasting peace. In this context, the Government of Japan fully supports the Security Council draft resolution (S/1997/887), which extends the mandate of UNMOT with increased strength, as recommended by the Secretary-General.

At the same time, we cannot but be concerned about the security situation on the ground, especially in the central part of the country, due to various violent actions of armed groups. Improving the security situation is a prerequisite for further efficient activities not only by UNMOT but also by the peacekeeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other international organizations. My delegation thus welcomes the recent agreement on the formation by the Government of Tajikistan and the UTO of a joint security unit to enhance the safety of UNMOT personnel, and hopes that this unit will be established without delay.

Finally, I am pleased to confirm that the Government of Japan has already made substantial contributions to the welfare of the people of Tajikistan in the form of humanitarian, refugee and technical assistance. It will continue such efforts, including the possible dispatch of civilian personnel to the strengthened UNMOT, thereby joining the international endeavour to facilitate the peace process in Tajikistan.

Mr. Dahlgren (Sweden): The United Nations has been closely involved in the negotiations towards peace in Tajikistan. The United Nations and the international community should now demonstrate their endurance as well as their support for the next crucial phase of consolidating peace in that country. The Government of Sweden therefore supports an expanded mandate for the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) as well as an increase in the size of the Mission.

We welcome the integrated approach taken by the Secretary-General in recommending enlarged responsibilities for the United Nations in Tajikistan. In assisting the parties to implement the inter-Tajik agreements, the United Nations will be making a broad contribution ranging from the political and military fields to the coordination of international humanitarian assistance and the reintegration of refugees. This, we feel, is a good example of how the joint capacity of the whole United Nations system can be used to support the peace process and lay the groundwork for the post-conflict reconstruction and long-term recovery of war-torn societies.

Implementing peace agreements is rarely a smooth process. It requires considerable good faith and constant efforts by the parties. In Tajikistan, progress has been achieved in a number of areas. Sweden welcomes the fact that both the Tajik Government and the United Tajik Opposition appear determined to pursue this process in a cooperative spirit.

The level of violence, in particular in the central part of the country, still gives rise to concern. In order for UNMOT to carry out its mandate, its safety and its ability to perform its tasks unhindered must be guaranteed. As we continue to follow closely events in Tajikistan, the safety of international personnel will continue to require our particular attention.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): The problems of Tajikistan are overdue for a solution. We are encouraged by the progress which has been reported by the Secretary-General in the implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. We consider that the exchange of prisoners of war and the process for the return of refugees are particularly important and urgent items.

We commend the parties in Tajikistan for their commitment to the peace process and urge them to continue to cooperate with each other and with the United Nations to ensure rapid progress on what is an ambitious timetable.

My delegation also commends the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who has been working in extremely difficult circumstances.

The draft resolution before us underlines the international community's commitment to helping the people of Tajikistan towards the rehabilitation of their country. But the principal responsibility for this, of course, lies with the Tajik parties themselves.

Although we accept the Secretary-General's recommendations for an expansion of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and will vote in favour of this draft resolution, we remain concerned about the security situation in Tajikistan. The formation of the joint security unit is a welcome and necessary step, but we shall need to follow closely developments which might affect the security and safety of UNMOT personnel and their ability to carry out their mandate effectively.

My delegation would also like to welcome the Secretary-General's initiative in holding a donor conference in Vienna in two weeks' time. The United Kingdom will be represented at that conference.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): The Tajik parties are engaged in a process of national reconciliation. This is a long and difficult undertaking, but the Government and the opposition alike are increasingly demonstrating their readiness to cooperate. We welcome in particular the intention stated by the two parties to establish a joint security unit to provide security mainly in the central part of the country, which remains the most exposed area.

The French delegation is fully aware that the security situation in Tajikistan remains precarious. That is why we attach great importance to the measures the Secretary-General will be taking to provide, as far as possible, for the protection of the personnel of the United

Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and of the international organizations in the field.

We are, however, convinced that the United Nations should now help the Tajiks restore peace to their country and rebuild it. The maintenance of international peace and security has never been risk-free; the United Nations must shoulder its responsibilities, because a lack of support from the Organization could hamper the rapid and complete implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan.

It is in that spirit that France supports the expansion of the mandate of UNMOT.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): The inter-Tajik peace process has come a long way in recent months. The signing of the Moscow General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan last June was a turning point in the bumpy road to peace. Despite occasional incidents of hostage-taking and terrorist attacks by disgruntled armed groups here and there, the process of national reconciliation is beginning to take firm root. The convening of the Commission on National Reconciliation, the exchange of prisoners of war and detainees between the Tajik Government and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), the registration of UTO fighters inside Tajikistan and the process of the repatriation of refugees from Afghanistan are all encouraging developments that testify to the firm commitment of the Tajik parties to the success of the process of peace and national reconciliation.

We pay tribute to President Rakhmonov and to the UTO leader, Mr. Nuri, for their courage and wisdom in coming to terms with each other in the broader interests of the nation. We sincerely hope that their commitment to peace and political goodwill will soon be translated into benefits of peace for the Tajik people. We express our appreciation to the Russian Federation and to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Merrem, for their successful mediation efforts. We also commend the personnel of UNMOT for their dedicated service under difficult and often dangerous circumstances.

Needless to say, and like anywhere else, a climate of security is essential to the monitoring by the United Nations of peace in Tajikistan. In this connection, we welcome the decision of the Tajik parties to form a joint security unit with a view to providing necessary security to UNMOT. We believe that this arrangement, together with the protection to be provided by peacekeepers from the Commonwealth of Independent States, will now make possible the strengthening and expansion of the mandate of UNMOT to meet its responsibilities of monitoring the peace agreements.

We believe that the commitment of the Tajik parties to peace and national reconciliation also deserves the financial support of the international community. In this regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to convene an international donor conference at Vienna later this month. The Republic of Korea will participate in this conference.

Korea attaches great importance to the success of the inter-Tajik peace process. We believe that peace in Tajikistan is vital for the peace and stability of the entire Central Asian region, which is inhabited by nearly 300,000 ethnic Koreans. My Government is encouraging our business community to actively participate in the reconstruction of the Tajik economy. We are also ready to contribute military observers to the expanded UNMOT.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea believes that the efforts of the Tajik parties themselves to make peace deserve the full support of the international community. We therefore support the extension of the mandate of UNMOT and its expansion, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report of 4 September 1997, and we will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Council.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): According to the latest report of the Secretary-General, there has been progress in the implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. This is welcome news. It is particularly important to note that the Commission on National Reconciliation, on which both the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) are represented, has now been convened on Tajik soil and has begun its work in earnest.

Other important steps have been taken, which have de-escalated tensions and allowed the return of refugees. There is no substitute for commitment and hard work by the parties to make peace. We encourage both the Government and the UTO actively to continue their efforts to implement fully the General Agreement.

I was particularly happy to hear the representative of Tajikistan state here today that genuine civil peace and concord is irreversible.

The international community — in particular, the United Nations — has been on hand to help the parties reach this stage and will continue to do so by offering its assistance towards implementing and consolidating peace in Tajikistan.

The Security Council today extends the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan for six months and authorizes an increase in its strength, as recommended by the Secretary-General, in order to carry out the tasks attributed to that United Nations mission. Like others, however, we remain concerned that the security situation is not yet under control, thereby threatening UNMOT and other international personnel as they carry out their activities. We stress that it is the responsibility of the parties to ensure that unarmed United Nations personnel are not put in harm's way, especially when they are striving to help the Tajik people. In this context, we welcome the agreement to form a joint Government/UTO security unit to escort and protect UNMOT, and we urge its rapid establishment.

Also important in this regard is the decision by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to authorize its peacekeeping forces in Tajikistan to provide security to the United Nations on request. While it is the responsibility of the parties to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel in Tajikistan, this decision by the CIS provides an important back-up for their protection.

The CIS peacekeeping forces in Tajikistan, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission, and the States and organizations in the Contact Group have played a crucial role in the international efforts to help peace gain a foothold in Tajikistan. We would like to add our voice to the tributes paid to Mr. Gerd Merrem, and to the men and women of UNMOT and of the United Nations agencies and programmes who are working in Tajikistan under such perilous conditions.

Portugal is pleased to join the consensus in adopting the draft resolution.

Mr. Larraín (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing gratitude for the further report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan.

Since we last considered the situation in Tajikistan, there has been significant progress in the implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord. The parties have shown definite signs of being determined to make the peace progress succeed, a fact that deserves our full recognition. In this transitional period they must persevere in good-faith fulfilment of the peace agreements, in particular the ceasefire agreement.

We must place on record our concern that, in spite of the significant progress in the political field, acts of violence are still taking place in the country, affecting the security situation and endangering the personnel of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT). The creation of a joint Government-Opposition security unit is a step in the right direction in order to safeguard the security of UNMOT personnel. We hope that the unit will become operational as soon as possible, thus permitting UNMOT's mandate to be implemented free from danger or interference.

The draft resolution that we are about to vote on follows the Secretary-General's recommendation to expand the UNMOT's mandate with a view to stepping up the Mission's participation in promoting peace and national reconciliation in Tajikistan. My delegation supports this strengthened role for UNMOT. We believe that the extension of its mandate until 15 May 1998 sends a clear signal of the commitment of the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, to ensuring stability in this part of Central Asia.

We would also like to thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for preparing the draft resolution which served as a basis for the one that we are about to adopt.

In my delegation's view, responsibility for the success of the peace process must be borne chiefly by the parties. We therefore hope that they will continue to cooperate actively with the efforts being carried out by the United Nations through its Mission.

In conclusion, I would like to express my delegation's recognition of and support for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Gerd Merrem, and his team. We urge him to continue working to ensure the success of the peace process in Tajikistan.

Mr. Sáenz Biolley (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation is taking the floor in this meeting on Tajikistan in order to reaffirm our resolute

support for the peace and reconciliation process in that country.

Amidst the difficulties that we have experienced in recent days on other issues, we feel that this occasion demonstrates the usefulness and value of dialogue and political negotiation as appropriate instruments of diplomacy for resolving conflicts that affect, or may affect, international peace and security.

It is clear that significant progress has been made by the Tajik parties in executing the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord and in maintaining the ceasefire. The active international presence has contributed to this progress. Here we would emphasize the admirable activities of the United Nations Mission, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeeping forces.

While bearing in mind the progress that has been made and the need to build on it, we should not ignore the fact that there are still difficulties which make it necessary for us to keep paying attention to the situation through the United Nations presence in Tajikistan.

Costa Rica supports the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) for an additional six months as well as the increase in its personnel, and we agree that the Mission should, at this new stage, use its best efforts to assist in the implementation of the General Agreement, which will be fundamental and decisive with regard to certain political issues, as well as of key importance with regard to other vital questions, such as the investigation of ceasefire violations and the monitoring of the cantonment, reintegration, disarming and demobilization of United Tajik Opposition (UTO) combatants.

As on other occasions, my country would like to draw attention to the question of the Tajik refugees in northern Afghanistan. We welcome the developments in the return process. This demonstrates the readiness of the parties to comply with what has been agreed, and we are therefore confident that it will continue and be completed. That, of course, will require clear resolve by the parties and the continued humanitarian support of the international community. This in turn requires a clear determination by the parties to cooperate and to assume their fundamental role in implementing what has been agreed. This is of particular importance, among other things, when it comes to guaranteeing the safety and freedom of movement of international personnel.

At the same time, Costa Rica underscores the great value of the Secretary-General's intention to convene a donor conference to obtain the international support necessary for the implementation of the General Agreement. My country associates itself with all those who have encouraged Member States of the Organization, especially those that have links to and interests in Tajikistan, to make a decisive contribution so that the process of peace and reconciliation can reach a successful conclusion.

In conclusion, I should like to express my country's gratitude for the outstanding role played by the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran in bringing peace to Tajikistan. My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland): We are here today to take an important decision concerning further United Nations support for the peace process in Tajikistan. Five years of civil war brought enormous human suffering to that country, but now, after the signature of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord on 27 June of this year, we look at the future of Tajikistan with more hope and optimism.

There has been certain visible progress on the difficult road towards peace and stability. The Secretary-General notes in his report the convening of the Commission on National Reconciliation, the exchange of prisoners of war and detainees, the registration of United Tajik Opposition fighters inside Tajikistan and the repatriation of refugees from Afghanistan. We share the Secretary-General's encouragement at the fact that the refugees have been received without hostility on their return.

The ceasefire is crucial to the successful conclusion of the peace process, and that is why we appeal to the parties to refrain from any violence, which continues to run high in the central part of the country.

We have no illusions about the seriousness of the conditions in which the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) will have to carry out its mandated tasks in the months to come. It is for that reason that we welcome the decision of President Rakhmonov and Mr. Nuri to form a joint security unit with the task of providing security to UNMOT personnel.

We believe that now, more than ever before, Tajikistan needs the international community and its firm

support. This is why we are in favour of the expansion of the size of UNMOT and the extension of its mandate. Our decision should serve the purpose of promoting peace and national reconciliation in Tajikistan.

I cannot conclude without paying tribute to the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Tajikistan, Mr. Gerd Merrem, and all the UNMOT personnel who have served with devotion in carrying out their tasks in often difficult and dangerous conditions.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): Let me at the outset pay tribute to Mr. Gerd Merrem, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, for his outstanding work and leadership, and to the men and women serving with the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) for the manner in which they have performed their duties under difficult and often dangerous conditions.

My delegation finds the Secretary-General's latest report on Tajikistan encouraging. The ceasefire holds. There is concrete progress in the implementation of the General Agreement on political, legal and military issues. There are also solid steps forward in the rehabilitation effort, and the donor pledging conference scheduled to be held at Vienna in the next 11 days should generate resources for the critical post-conflict peace-building phase that my delegation has always viewed as critical in these situations.

We also strongly believe that the Commission on National Reconciliation is very important, and we commend its efforts and encourage it to continue with its good work.

The security situation, however, is still unsettled. We believe that the joint security unit will help. We hope that those elements in Tajikistan intent on using violence as a means of resolving their differences will reject that approach and work with other parties in rebuilding a peaceful Tajikistan. This is the only way in which a democratic, peaceful, economically viable Tajikistan can be built. UNMOT's critical role in ensuring the implementation of the General Agreement is commendable.

Finally, my delegation supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to expand UNMOT from 45 to 120 military observers and, in this regard, will support the draft resolution before us. We are happy to note that despite this expansion the cost is actually slightly less than the estimates previously proposed.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the evolution of the situation in Tajikistan. I should also like to express my thanks to his assistants, and in particular to his Special Representative, Mr. Gerd Merrem.

We welcome the serious efforts being made by the Government of Tajikistan, as well as those of the United Tajik Opposition, to fulfil the commitments entered into under the General Agreement. My delegation also welcomes the progress made in the activities undertaken by the Commission on National Reconciliation, and I would mention in particular the exchange of prisoners of war and detainees as well as the registration of members of the United Tajik Opposition who are present in Tajikistan and the repatriation of refugees from Afghanistan to their country.

In this regard, I should also like to express our concern at the explosive security situation in Tajikistan, especially in the central part of the State. In addition, there is a need to call upon both Tajik parties to cooperate further in ensuring the safety and freedom of movement of the personnel of the United Nations, the collective peacekeeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and other international personnel.

I should like, in this context, to express our appreciation for the agreement reached by the two parties regarding the creation of a joint security unit to carry out the task of providing security, including armed escorts, for the personnel of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT). In this regard, Egypt hopes that the unit will begin functioning at the end of this month, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report.

In conclusion, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution on expanding UNMOT, on the basis of the proposals of the Secretary-General in his report, and on the extension of its mandate until 15 May 1998.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): The Security Council's consideration today of the situation in Tajikistan and along its frontier with Afghanistan gives us an ideal opportunity to welcome the progress that has been made towards peace — peace that in order to be lasting needs to be bolstered by specific action on the part of the protagonists. This is my delegation's view, as we understand it, and it is what the

Secretary-General is working towards in his efforts to support the quest for peace and to create conditions favourable to its consolidation.

In his successive reports of 4 September and 5 November, the Secretary-General has given us an appraisal of the status of the negotiations and of the headway made in the right direction, that is to say, the path towards peace through negotiation. We believe that it is desirable for the Tajik Government and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) to strive to ensure that this peace — which is still fragile — is bolstered through the establishment of the necessary structures. We refer in particular to consolidation of the ceasefire, the exchange of prisoners, and the creation of a climate conducive to the return of refugees in decent conditions.

My delegation wishes to pay tribute to the unflagging work being done by the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Iran, whose steadying and animating role should encourage us to emulate them so that the peace we all desire can emerge in Tajikistan. To this end, all members of the international community must rigorously commit themselves, since we have already declared our support for the territorial integrity of Tajikistan to be respected and the inviolability of its borders to become a reality.

Tajikistan has unfortunately become the object of many covetous eyes, and we hope that all the neighbouring countries of Tajikistan can work in concert with the rest of the international community to ensure that peace is the only item on the agenda in all the efforts that are made in that country and around it.

My delegation will try to ensure that what the Secretary-General has recommended becomes a reality, and it is with that in mind that we join the other members of the Council in adopting this draft resolution, which highlights the arguments put forward by the Secretary-General in favour of expanding the personnel of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and also authorizes the Secretary-General to extend UNMOT's mandate until 15 May 1998.

I take this opportunity to say that, in the view of my delegation, if peace in Tajikistan is to be lasting and permanent, all the parties must follow a policy of inclusion, working through dialogue, consultation and negotiation in order to ensure that all the men and women of that great country can work together and build a country that once again becomes the haven of peace they all seek.

In conclusion, I would also like to express the hope that every effort will be made by the Government of Tajikistan as well as by the UTO and the other parties that have not yet decided to join the UTO to provide security for UNMOT personnel, whose important role was recognized in the letter of 27 June 1997 from the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and Mr. Nuri to the Secretary-General.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of China.

As a neighbour of Tajikistan, China welcomes the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, signed by the two parties in that country, and we are pleased by the stabilization of the overall situation in Tajikistan. We believe the General Agreement is conducive to moving the Tajik peace process forward, leading to the ultimate realization of national reconciliation in Tajikistan.

In his report to the Security Council, the Secretary-General recommends the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and UNMOT's expansion. We believe that this recommendation is in conformity with the wishes of the parties concerned and is conducive to the implementation of the General Agreement. The Chinese delegation will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution.

The peace in Tajikistan is hard won. We appreciate the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and the countries of the region, such as the Russian Federation. We hope that the two parties concerned can implement the General Agreement in real earnest, adopt effective measures and cooperate with the United Nations so as to enable UNMOT to smoothly carry out its mandate.

At the same time, we believe that the international community should provide Tajikistan with urgently needed assistance to help its economic reconstruction.

We sincerely hope that, through the common efforts of the parties concerned, and with the vigorous help of the international community, Tajikistan can achieve sustained stability and economic development as soon as possible.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1997/887.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, France, Guinea-Bissau, Japan, Kenya, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1138 (1997).

There are no more speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.